

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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ISSUE BRIEF

Date: March 1, 2013

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Community High School of Vermont

Results First¹ is a pilot project of the Joint Fiscal Office. The project is intended to provide legislators with a tool to compare the costs and benefits of state programs. This issue brief is the product of the Joint Fiscal Office's attempt to identify the costs associated with the Community High School of Vermont (CHSVT). This issue brief is not a complete analysis of the CHSVT because it does not attempt to derive the benefits of this program. Documents supporting this analysis are included as appendices.

The statutory purpose of CHSVT is to educate persons who have not completed secondary education and who are committed to DOC custody. CHSVT is a fully accredited Vermont high school program offered by the Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) and graduates of the program receive a high school diploma.² Most students are under the custody of the DOC; however, the school is also available to students not under DOC supervision.³ CHSVT provides programs that balance public safety and security with the educational needs of its student. This issue brief is intended to support the financial evaluation of CHSVT, but it is not intended for use to compare costs or educational outcomes of CHSVT to those of traditional high schools in Vermont.

Key Findings:

All results and estimates reflect FY2012 data provided to the Joint Fiscal Office by the Vermont Department of Corrections and the Community High School of Vermont. In FY2012, correctional education was appropriated \$4,697,484.

1. CHSVT programming is operating well below capacity. As a result, the actual cost per full-time-equivalent student is substantially higher than would be the case if the program were running at capacity.⁴

Education in Facilities - Cost Per Full-Time-Equivalent Student		
	Capacity	Actual
Academic	\$11,288	\$22,147
Vocational	\$10,518	\$29,626

Education in Communities - Cost Per Full-Time-Equivalent Student		
	Capacity	Actual
Academic	\$11,196	\$56,186
Vocational	n/a	n/a

¹ Results First is a joint initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation that helps states build their capacity to conduct cost-benefit analysis. This approach draws on a national database of program evaluations and is being customized using Vermont's program and cost data.

² Most, if not all, correctional education programs around the country are intended to help students earn a GED rather than a high school diploma.

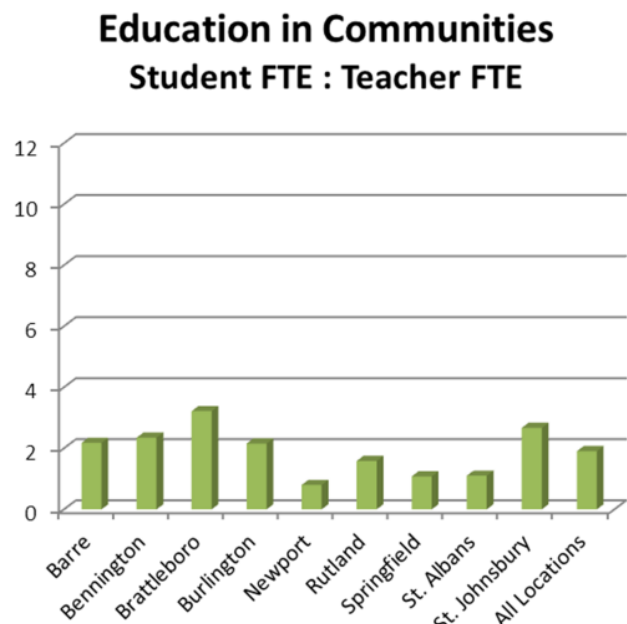
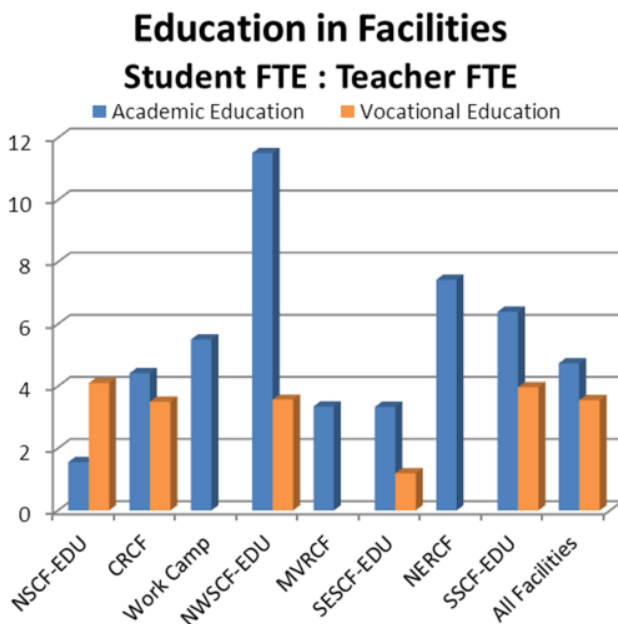
³ All persons under DOC custody who are under the age of 23 and have not received a high school diploma are required to participate in CHSVT unless exempted (28 V.S.A. § 120). Although not required by law, CHSVT programming is also offered to persons age 23 and over in DOC custody. Community campuses offer programming to individuals under DOC custody and supervision. Community campus programming is also available to qualifying individuals not under DOC custody/supervision, but participation is low.

⁴ Methodology and facility-specific information is available in the appendix.

- Many students only attend CHSVT for a short period. As a result, less than 200 full-time-equivalent students were served in FY12. Many more unique students are served within DOC facilities than at community locations.

Students Served - Actual		
	Unique	Full-Time-Equivalent
Facility - Academic	2,422	107.16
Facility - Vocational	963	31.73
Community	497	32.13

- Current full-time-equivalent student to full-time-equivalent teacher ratios are extremely low because CHSVT serves a low number of full-time-equivalent students at 17 locations throughout the state (8 facility locations and 9 community settings).



Conclusion:

The CHSVT has a high per-student cost. There are a variety of opportunities to improve its cost-effectiveness, but each option would face challenges. Options include:

- Increase participation in CHSVT programming in order to reduce the actual costs per full-time-equivalent student (for example, DOC has proposed reducing the number of community locations at which programming is offered).
- Reduce expenses in CHSVT programming in order to reduce the actual cost per full-time-equivalent student.
- Redesign the focus and substance of the curriculum to fulfill the statutory purpose of the program at a lower cost (for example, the program could focus helping a student secure a high school equivalency credential, such as passing the GED, or a vocational certification instead of a high school diploma).

APPENDIX
Community High School of Vermont Result First Financial Data
Prepared By Ira Sollace

The objective of this exercise was to determine the cost of providing educational and vocational programs within the correctional facilities operated by the Department of Corrections (DOC). The Community High School of Vermont (CHSVT) originally provided me with cost data from FY'11 stating the average cost per participant for both the high school and vocational education program was \$2,971. In late October 2012, during a meeting with DOC representatives to discuss the above cost data, the Superintendent of the CHSVT noted concern of the \$2,971 per participant being a representation of the average cost of educating offenders. At this point all agreed I would lead a group of CHSVT and DOC financial staff to develop a more accurate number.

The group consisting of Sarah Clark, Matt D'Agostino, Troy McAllister, Dana Lesperance and me met on three occasions with additional data sharing between meetings. The objective was to determine an "average cost of a Full Time Student" for educational and vocational programs within both facility and community settings. A draft worksheet was presented to CHSVT executive team for review the data and methodology used to arrive at the cost. The worksheet was then reviewed by the CHSVT Board of Directors. At this review some calculation assumptions, formulas errors and omitted information were discovered by board member George Cross. With Mr. Cross' input, we were able to finalize what I believe is an accurate representation of the average cost of educating a FTE student is for FY'12.

Attached are a set of documents showing the results of the groups work and some additional research resulting from some follow-up questions. Documents represent the following:

Spreadsheets:

Attachment A- Average cost of a FTE student for both educational and vocational program operated within facilities provided the programs were operating at capacity in SFY'12.

Attachment B – Average cost of a FTE student for both educational and vocational programs operated within facilities based on actual occupancy in SFY'12.

Attachment C – Average cost of a FTE student for the educational programs operated within the communities provided programs were running at capacity for SFY'12.

Attachment D – Average cost of a FTE student for the educational programs operated within the communities based on actual occupancy in SFY'12.

Word Documents:

Attachment E: This document provides a guide to the data and cell formulae within the spreadsheet.

Graphs:

Attachment F: This graph is a historical picture of GED's and Diplomas issues between FY 2001 and FY 2012.

Attachment G: This graph is a historical picture of the number of student hours in Educational Instruction between FY 2001 and FY 2012.

Attachment H: This graph illustrates the Educational Needs of Youths in DOC Custody without a High School Diploma.

Tables:

Attachment I: This table outlines Individuals Attending CHCVT Community Sites by Offender and Non-Offender Classification for FY 2012.

Attachment J: This table outlines Offenders Enrolled in Educational Activities in FY 2012 By Age and High School Diploma Status.

It should be noted that this was a **financial exercise** to develop as accurately as possible, the cost data for the CHSVT. This data should not be used to develop a comparison with other local community high schools. Some examples for this are listed below:

1. In SFY'12 CHSVT had 230 instructional days per year, in local high schools this number is 175.
2. The majority of students attending the CHSVT have special needs but not rising to the IEP level. The structure of the school and how instruction is delivered, students are able to learn without specialized instruction which may be necessary in a traditional community high school.
3. The cost included within the CHSVT are not comparable to local high schools for the following reasons:
 - CHSVT costs do not include facility related costs, such as building maintenance, ground maintenance, utility cost, etc.
 - There is no capital bonding cost calculated within the educational cost data.
 - There are no cafeteria cost expenses within the educational cost data.
 - CHSVT do not support any outside athletic programs.
 - CHSVT do not have any transportation cost.

From the information contained within the Attachments the following observations can be made:

- Both the facilities and community sites have attendance records well below staffing levels.
- Facility attendance to capacity ratios run from Northwest State at 32% over capacity to Northern State 25% of capacity.
- Community sites, as a whole, had attendance during SFY'12 at 19% of capacity, individual site results range from 33% of capacity in Brattleboro to 9% of capacity in Newport.
- The issuance of high school diplomas is at its lowest level since FY 2002.
- The total number of student educational instructional hours is the lowest it has been since FY 1996.
- The majority of incarcerated offenders in FY 2012 under the age of 22 residing in a Vermont facility with no high school diploma received DOC educational services.
- The offenders within communities choose, to a lesser degree, not to participate in available educational services depending on their involvement in Special Educational services prior to adjudication.
- The majority of individuals attending educational services in the community were offenders (942) versus non-offenders (64) during FY 2012.
- The majority (76%) of the offenders being serviced by CHSVT on 01/01/2012 had not received their high school diploma. Interestingly, 75% of these offenders age is 23 and older.

I want to stress again, this was a financial exercise to solely determine student FTE capacity and actual attendance; it in no way is a reflection of the quality of education services being provided by the CHSVT. My experience at DOC tells me the CHSVT educational experience is of a very high quality.

Attachment A

Community High School of Vermont

Capacity Participation Data - Facilities

Academic

Facility	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE	Student FTE per Staff FTE	Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Cost per FTE
NSCF-EDU	67,850.00	505	6.50	59.00	9.08	\$ 639,196.58	\$ 39,865.47	\$ 679,062.05	\$ 11,509.53
CRCF	23,000.00	284	2.00	20.00	10.00	\$ 196,675.87	\$ 10,163.11	\$ 206,838.98	\$ 10,341.95
Work Camp	18,400.00	191	2.00	16.00	8.00	\$ 196,675.87	\$ 9,734.13	\$ 206,410.00	\$ 12,900.63
NWSCF-EDU	14,950.00	268	1.50	13.00	8.67	\$ 147,506.90	\$ 17,619.37	\$ 165,126.27	\$ 12,702.02
MVRCF	26,450.00	462	2.50	23.00	9.20	\$ 245,844.84	\$ 13,859.41	\$ 259,704.25	\$ 11,291.49
SESCF-EDU	15,812.50	134	1.375	13.75	10.00	\$ 135,214.66	\$ 11,496.05	\$ 146,710.71	\$ 10,669.87
NERCF	40,825.00	259	3.75	35.50	9.47	\$ 368,767.26	\$ 27,106.12	\$ 395,873.38	\$ 11,151.36
SSCF-EDU	34,500.00	319	3.00	30.00	10.00	\$ 295,013.81	\$ 18,622.98	\$ 313,636.79	\$ 10,454.56
Total	241,787.50	2,422	22.625	210.25	9.29	\$ 2,224,895.79	\$ 148,466.64	\$ 2,373,362.43	\$ 11,288.29

Vocational

Facility	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE		Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Cost per FTE
CRCF- VOC	3,593.75	117	0.31	3.13	10.00	\$ 29,020.56	\$ 585.13	\$ 29,605.69	\$ 9,473.82
NSCF-VOC	35,937.50	437	3.13	31.25	10.00	\$ 290,205.57	\$ 27,435.04	\$ 317,640.61	\$ 10,164.50
NWSCF-VOC	24,437.50	93	2.13	21.25	10.00	\$ 197,339.79	\$ 38,521.63	\$ 235,861.42	\$ 11,099.36
SESCF-VOC	12,937.50	97	1.13	11.25	10.00	\$ 104,474.01	\$ 28,591.65	\$ 133,065.66	\$ 11,828.06
SSCF-VOC	25,875.00	219	2.25	22.50	10.00	\$ 208,948.01	\$ 14,946.02	\$ 223,894.03	\$ 9,950.85
Total	102,781.25	963	8.94	89.38	10.00	\$ 829,987.94	\$ 110,079.47	\$ 940,067.41	\$ 10,518.24

Attachment B

Community High School of Vermont

Actual Participation Data - Facilities

Academic

Facility	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE	Student FTE per Staff FTE	Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Cost per FTE
NSCF-EDU	11,611.80	505	6.5	10.10	1.55	\$ 639,196.58	\$ 39,865.47	\$ 679,062.05	\$ 67,252.39
CRCF	10,155.40	284	2	8.83	4.42	\$ 196,675.87	\$ 10,163.11	\$ 206,838.98	\$ 23,422.50
Work Camp	12,651.00	191	2	11.00	5.50	\$ 196,675.87	\$ 9,734.13	\$ 206,410.00	\$ 18,763.06
NWSCF-EDU	19,846.50	268	1.5	17.26	11.51	\$ 147,506.90	\$ 17,619.37	\$ 165,126.27	\$ 9,568.20
MVRCF	9,619.10	462	2.5	8.36	3.35	\$ 245,844.84	\$ 13,859.41	\$ 259,704.25	\$ 31,048.63
SESCF-EDU	5,266.70	134	1.375	4.58	3.33	\$ 135,214.66	\$ 11,496.05	\$ 146,710.71	\$ 32,034.73
NERCF	32,019.70	259	3.75	27.84	7.42	\$ 368,767.26	\$ 27,106.12	\$ 395,873.38	\$ 14,217.95
SSCF-EDU	22,066.00	319	3	19.19	6.40	\$ 295,013.81	\$ 18,622.98	\$ 313,636.79	\$ 16,345.61
Total	123,236.20	2,422	22.625	107.16	4.74	\$ 2,224,895.79	\$ 148,466.64	\$ 2,373,362.43	\$ 22,147.44

Vocational

Facility	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE	Student FTE per Staff FTE	Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Cost per FTE
CRCF- VOC	1,256.90	117	0.3125	1.09	3.50	\$ 29,020.56	\$ 585.13	\$ 29,605.69	\$ 27,087.71
NSCF-VOC	14,726.10	437	3.125	12.81	4.10	\$ 290,205.57	\$ 27,435.04	\$ 317,640.61	\$ 24,805.39
NWSCF-VOC	8,709.40	93	2.125	7.57	3.56	\$ 197,339.79	\$ 38,521.63	\$ 235,861.42	\$ 31,143.44
SESCF-VOC	1,544.00	97	1.125	1.34	1.19	\$ 104,474.01	\$ 28,591.65	\$ 133,065.66	\$ 99,109.78
SSCF-VOC	10,254.60	219	2.25	8.92	3.96	\$ 208,948.01	\$ 14,946.02	\$ 223,894.03	\$ 25,108.55
Total	36,491.00	963	8.94	31.73	3.55	\$ 829,987.94	\$ 110,079.47	\$ 940,067.41	\$ 29,625.87

Attachment C

Community High School of Vermont

Capacity Participation Data - Community Sites

Communtiy	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE	Student FTE per Staff FTE	Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Average Cost per FTE
Barre	25,587.50	104	2.375	22.25	9.37	\$ 241,420.21	\$ 11,916.63	\$ 253,336.84	\$ 11,385.93
Bennington	23,000.00	36	2	20.00	10.00	\$ 203,301.23	\$ 10,341.08	\$ 213,642.31	\$ 10,682.12
Brattleboro	24,725.00	55	2.25	21.50	9.56	\$ 228,713.88	\$ 4,575.51	\$ 233,289.39	\$ 10,850.67
Burlington	14,950.00	48	1.5	13.00	8.67	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 16,833.92	\$ 169,309.84	\$ 13,023.83
Newport	23,862.50	47	2.125	20.75	9.76	\$ 216,007.56	\$ 12,961.00	\$ 228,968.56	\$ 11,034.63
Rutland	27,312.50	61	2.625	23.75	9.05	\$ 266,832.86	\$ 11,625.05	\$ 278,457.91	\$ 11,724.54
Springfield	16,100.00	43	1.5	14.00	9.33	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 10,000.18	\$ 162,476.10	\$ 11,605.44
St. Albans	18,400.50	29	1.5	16.00	10.67	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 3,960.14	\$ 156,436.06	\$ 9,776.99
St. Johnsbury	11,500.00	74	1	10.00	10.00	\$ 101,650.61	\$ 7,859.16	\$ 109,509.77	\$ 10,950.98
Total	185,438.00	497	16.875	161.25	9.56	\$ 1,715,354.12	\$ 90,072.67	\$ 1,805,426.79	\$ 11,196.42

Attachment D

Community High School of Vermont
Actual Participation Data - Community Sites

Communtiy	Hours Student	Unique Students	Staff FTE	Student FTE	Student FTE per Staff FTE	Total Salary & Benefits	Operating Expenses	Total Cost	Cost per FTE
Barre	5,953.10	104	2.375	5.18	2.18	\$ 241,420.21	\$ 11,916.63	\$ 253,336.84	\$ 48,938.77
Bennington	5,398.30	36	2	4.69	2.35	\$ 203,301.23	\$ 10,341.08	\$ 213,642.31	\$ 45,512.23
Brattleboro	8,318.20	55	2.25	7.23	3.21	\$ 228,713.88	\$ 4,575.51	\$ 233,289.39	\$ 32,252.51
Burlington	3,719.10	48	1.5	3.23	2.16	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 16,833.92	\$ 169,309.84	\$ 52,353.07
Newport	1,954.90	47	2.125	1.70	0.80	\$ 216,007.56	\$ 12,961.00	\$ 228,968.56	\$ 134,694.28
Rutland	4,776.40	61	2.625	4.15	1.58	\$ 266,832.86	\$ 11,625.05	\$ 278,457.91	\$ 67,043.51
Springfield	1,861.80	43	1.5	1.62	1.08	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 10,000.18	\$ 162,476.10	\$ 100,358.53
St. Albans	1,903.40	29	1.5	1.66	1.10	\$ 152,475.92	\$ 3,960.14	\$ 156,436.06	\$ 94,515.85
St. Johnsbury	3,068.00	74	1	2.67	2.67	\$ 101,650.61	\$ 7,859.16	\$ 109,509.77	\$ 41,048.32
Total	36,953.20	497	16.875	32.13	1.90	\$ 1,715,354.12	\$ 90,072.67	\$ 1,805,426.79	\$ 56,185.68

Attachment E

Community High School of Vermont
Explanation of Data Point within Spreadsheet
Prepared by Ira Sollace

Capacity Spreadsheet:

Column B (Student Hours): $11,500 * \text{number of FTE Classified Teachers} + 6,900 * \text{number of Adjunct Teachers} = \text{Total Number of Hours of Teaching Capacity}$.

- **11,500** = Non – Special Educational Instructional Program Days (230) * Number of Classes per Day (5) * Capacity of Class (10)
- **6,900** = Special Education Instructional Program Days (230) * Number of Classes per Day (3) * Capacity of Class (10)

Column C (Unique Students): Represents the number of unduplicated students that participated in at least one classroom hour of instruction.

Column D (Staff FTE): Represents the number of regular or special education teachers assigned that particular location.

Column E (Student FTE): Represents the Full Time Student Capacity per location

- $\text{Column B} / 1,150 \text{ hours (5 (hours of class) * 230 (Number of Instructional Days Program Days))}$

Column F (Student FTE Per Staff FTE): Represents the number of FTE Students per Staff FTE at Capacity per location

- $\text{Column E} / \text{Column D}$

Column G (Total Salaries & Benefits): Represents Actual Cost of Salary, Benefits and Indirect Cost of the location.

- For Facility (Academic) $\$75,000 + 23,337.94 * \text{Column D}$
- For Facility (Vocational) $\$75,000 + 17,865.78 * \text{Column D}$
- For Community $\$75,000 + 26,650.61 * \text{Column D}$
- **\$75,000** = Average cost of a full time teacher
- **\$23,337.94** = Average indirect cost per teacher Facility (Academic)
- **\$17,865.78** = Average indirect cost per teacher Facility (Vocational)
- **\$26,650.61** = Average indirect cost per teacher (Community)
- **Indirect Cost:** Include cost not directly related to the delivery of educational services at either facility or community sites. These costs would include Central Office staff and expenses, etc.

Column H (Operating Expenses): Represents Actual Operating Expenditures at Location.

Column I (Total Cost): Represents Total Cost for Location Related To Education.

- $\text{Column G} + \text{Column H}$

Column J (Average Cost Per Student): Represents the Average Cost to Educate a Student in the Community Based on Capacity.

- $\text{Column I} / \text{Column E}$

Attachment E

Actual Student Participation Spreadsheet:

Column B (Student Hours): Actual number of student hours as recorded by teachers at each location.

Column C (Unique Students): Represents the number of unduplicated students that participated in at least one classroom hour of instruction.

Column D (Staff FTE): Represents the number of regular or special education teachers assigned that particular location.

Column E (Student FTE): Represents the Full Time Student Capacity per location

- $\text{Column B} / 1,150 \text{ hours (5 (hours of class) * 230 (Number of Instructional Days Program Days))}$

Column F (Student FTE Per Staff FTE): Represents the number of FTE Students per Staff FTE at Capacity per location

- $\text{Column E} / \text{Column D}$

Column G (Total Salaries & Benefits): Represents Actual Cost of Salary, Benefits and Indirect Cost of the location.

- For Facility (Academic) $\$75,000 + 23,337.94 * \text{Column D}$
- For Facility (Vocational) $\$75,000 + 17,865.78 * \text{Column D}$
- For Community $\$75,000 + 26,650.61 * \text{Column D}$

- **\$75,000** = Average cost of a full time teacher
- **\$23,337.94** = Average indirect cost per teacher Facility (Academic)
- **\$17,865.78** = Average indirect cost per teacher Facility (Vocational)
- **\$26,650.61** = Average indirect cost per teacher (Community)

Column H (Operating Expenses): Represents Actual Operating Expenditures at Location.

Column I (Total Cost): Represents Total Cost for Location Related To Education.

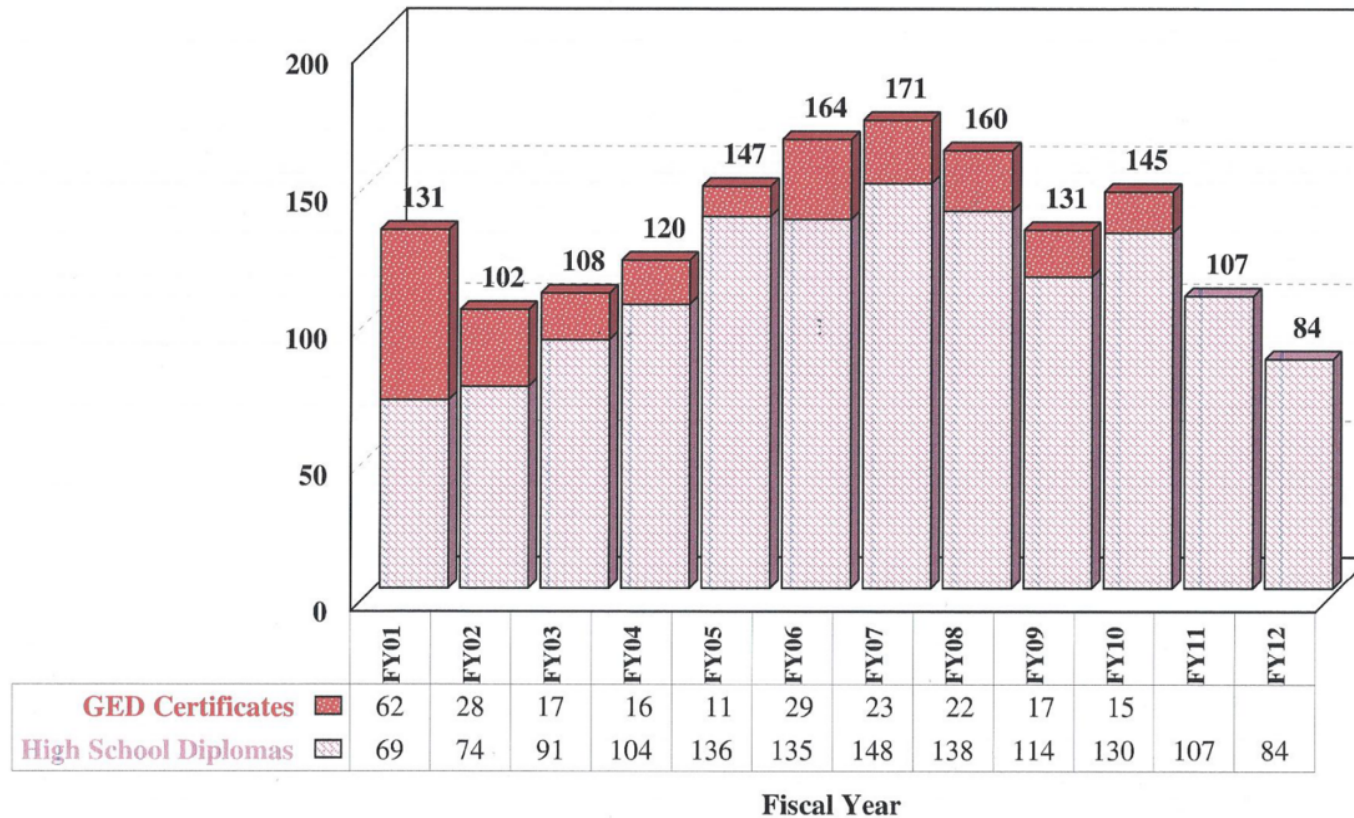
- $\text{Column G} + \text{Column H}$

Column J (Average Cost Per Student): Represents the Average Cost to Educate a Student in the Community Based on Actual Participation and Actual Cost.

- $\text{Column I} / \text{Column E}$

Education Certificates

GED's and Diplomas

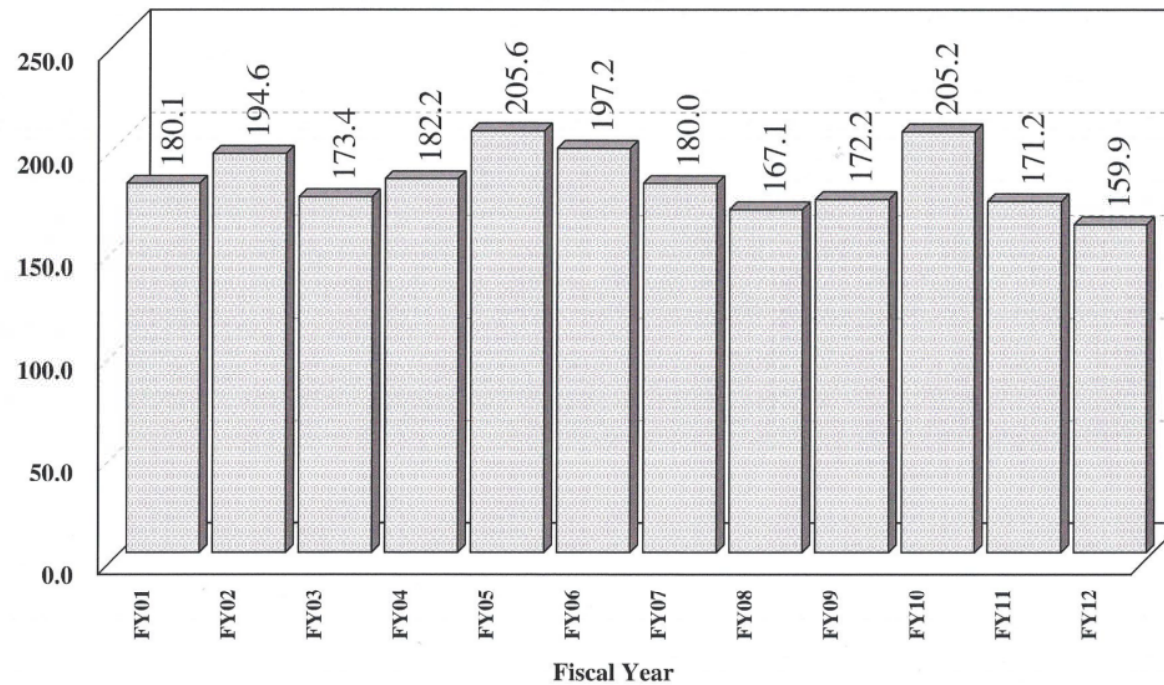


Source: Community High School of Vermont, Annual Reports. After FY2010, GED certificates are no longer issued by CHSVT.

Student Hours in Education Instruction

Total Hours in Fiscal Year in Organized Programs of Instruction

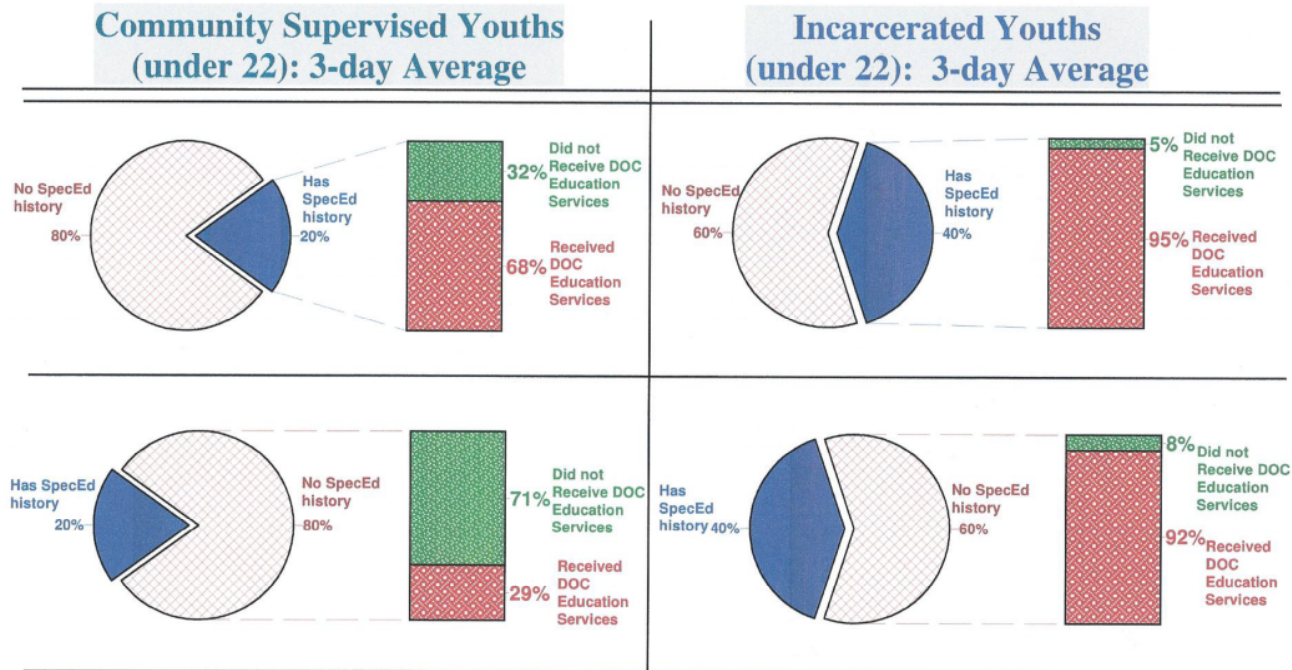
Thousands of Hours - All Facilities & Field Sites



Source: Community High School of Vermont, Annual Reports.

Educational Needs of Youths in VTDOC Custody

For Persons without High School Diplomas only



SpecEd=Received Special Education Services prior to adjudication (and remanding to VTDOC) (DOC data; self report)

Source: Cooperative study by Vermont Departments of Education and Corrections of overlap of data about persons under age 22 in custody of Corrections on sample dates of October 1 2003, December 1 2003, and June 1 2004.

Attachment I

Individuals Attending CHSVT Community Sites
Breakout by Offenders and Non-Offenders

Fiscal Year 2012

Individuals Served (attended) by Group Type at Community Sites between 07/01/2011 and 06/30/2012
Total individuals served 1006
Total offenders served 942
Total non-offenders (Community Students) served 64

Point in Time Data – October 04 2011

Individuals Served (attended) by Group Type at Community Sites between 10/4/2011 and 10/04/2011
Total individuals served 112
Total offenders served 102
Total non-offenders (Community Students) served 10

Data Source: Community High School of Vermont, January 11 2013

Attachment J

Offenders Enrolled in Educational Activities FY'12
By Age and High School Diploma Standing

Count of unique students served at all sites from 07/01/2011 through 06/30/2012.
Number of unique individuals participating in educational activities = 2269
Number of unique individuals participating in educational activities for at least one hour = 1985
Number of unique individuals participating in educational activities for at least one hour and enrolled in CHSVT = 1837
Breakout of Students by Age and HSD Status on 01/01/2012
Under age 23 and have no diploma 346
Under age 23 and having a diploma 114
Age 23 or older having no diploma 1050
Age 23 and older and having a diploma 327

Data Source: Community High School of Vermont, January 28, 2013